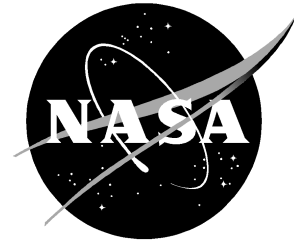


# NewsRelease



National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Langley Research Center**  
Hampton, Virginia 23681-2199

---

Kimberly W. Land  
(757) 864-9885

For Release: March 5, 2001

RELEASE: 01-015

## **NASA Langley sponsors national robotics competition**

Dozens of sophisticated, remotely-operated, human-sized robots will compete on a field the size of a basketball court as NASA's Langley Research Center and Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Engineering host a regional robotics competition March 8-10 at the Siegel Center in Richmond, Va.

Winners will be determined by which team designed and built the best robotic basketball player in an environment that will look and sound more like a college or professional basketball tournament than a high school science competition.

The For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) competition is the largest of 13 regional robotics competitions held nationwide, with approximately 70 teams of students, engineers, technicians, and teachers scheduled to attend. Langley is providing sponsorship to 20 teams and is again working closely with a team from the New Horizons Regional Education Center in Hampton, Va.

NASA's Jeff Seaton, from Langley's Aerospace Systems, Concepts & Analysis Competency, is lead again playing a role in this year's competition. Seaton has worked with the New Horizons team for the past four years.

In addition to sponsorship, the New Horizons team gets the benefit of working with current and retired NASA engineers and researchers. They get to invent new things with NASA, says Seaton. They also learn that math and science can be fun.

Each year, FIRST develops the robotics competition by supplying a problem and a kit of parts to teams of students. Each team has just six weeks to organize, design, build, program and test its robot for competition. This year's competition involves matches of four teams that will take the floor simultaneously, and work together to score the most points. These partners change each match, so teams do not play the same group in any match.

A special guest at this year's competition will be Dr. Joseph Allen, the former NASA astronaut who served as a mission specialist on two Space Shuttle flights as well as a mission controller for Apollo 15 and 17.

-more-

FIRST is a non-profit organization established in 1989 by Dean Kamen, an entrepreneur and inventor with over 100 patents. FIRST's mission is to stimulate student interest in math and science. In 1992, FIRST began organizing a national robotics competition. The goal of the program is to join high school students with professional engineers and technicians from industry and academia to design, construct and operate the robots. The event has become known as the Super-bowl of engineering and the ultimate mind sport.

---

**Media Opportunity:**

Members of the news media are invited to attend the competition. The competition will be broadcast via the Internet on Friday, March 9 and Saturday, March 10 at <http://robots.larc.nasa.gov>. Interviews and b-roll of the competition will also be available. Interested media should call **Kimberly W. Land, 757-864-9885 or 757-344-7711/cell phone.**

---